DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 176 767 IR 007 721

AUTHOR Siddique, A Bakr
TITLE Subscribing to Foreign Journals in Bangladesh.
PUB DATE Sep 77
NOTE 9p.; Paper prepared for the 1977 IFLA/UNESCO Pre-Session Seminar on Resource Sharing of Libraries in Developing Countries (Antwerp, Belgium, August 30-September 4, 1977); Best copy available; For related documents, see IR 007 707-722

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Developing Nations; *Information Needs; International Educational Exchange; International Programs; *Library Acquisition; *Library Cooperation; *Periodicals; Problems; University Libraries
IDENTIFIERS *Bangladesh

ABSTRACT

The lack of foreign exchange caused serious problems in the acquisition of foreign journals by libraries in Bangladesh during the first years of independence. Although the governments of the United Kingdom and the United States of America (under ODA and AID schemes) have provided financial and other assistance, few institutes have received the journals in complete runs. A major problem for the acquisition of foreign journals seems to be the loss of issues in transit, in addition to increasing costs for subscriptions and postage (registered post and air mail). A cooperative project at the international level might help the universities of Bangladesh to fill in the missing issues. (Author/JEG)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED176767

U S DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH,
EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF
EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

SUBSCRIBING TO FOREIGN JOURNALS IN BANGLADESH

by

Abu Bakr Siddique

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

H.D.L. Verliet

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

IR001721

SUBSCRIBING TO FOREIGN JOURNALS IN BANGLADESH

-Abu Bakr Siddique

The acquisition of foreign journals has posed serious problems in Bangladesh. During the first three years following birth of Bangladesh on December 16,1971, the universities and research institutions in Bangladesh had insufficient foreign exchange to pay for the renewal of subscriptions to journals. This interrupted the continued flow of journals which the universities and research institutions in Bangladesh had been maintaining for some time. Towards the end of 1973, the Governments of U.K. and U.S.A. under ODA and AID schemes, respectively, came to help the universities in paying subscriptions to some of their much desired journals for two to three years and also in acquiring much needed text-books. Most of the text-books were received in tact but so far as the journals are concerned, frankly speaking, hardly any university received any title complete, although the donors entered the subscription to the journals through reputed subscription agencies. More recently, upon receipt of adequate foreign exchange from the Government of Bangladesh, the universities and research organisations arranged to enter their subscriptions to the journals through reputed subscription agencies abroad, some even paying subscriptions direct to the publishers.But what is so frustrating is that hardly any university or research institution has received the journals in complete runs. How the situtation has deteriorated will be apparant from the fact that four professors of the Chemical Engineering Departments Bangladesh University of Engineering and

Technology, Dacca, together could not complete the set of Chemical Engineering Progress which they received as members of the American Institute of Chemical Engineers. Moreover, a survey conducted in major libraries in and around Dacca by the writer of this paper shows that no subscriber to the foreign journals receives the journals in complete runs. The renge of non-receipt of journals varies from 11% to 49%. Whom to blame? Conscientious subscribers particularly librarians pursue the missing issues of the journals. Where the journals are subscribed to through a subscription agency, the librarians or the subscribers first approach them for filling up the gaps and failing this, the respective publishers. The publishers, in their turn, want full data as regards (i) the issues allegedly not received as well as (ii) ~~the number~~ subscribers number noted on the address slip (iii) the number and date of the invoices (iv) the date of payment for the journals claimed (v) the address to which the journals have been posted hitherto, (vi) the name of the subscription agency through which the subscriptions were remitted and so on.

Compliance with all these requirements however, does not often yield the desired result. For the publishers state that the claims could be entertained if the claims along with all the particulars could reach them within a stated time, say three or four months from the date of the despatch of the journals or the publication date of the journals. Here is the dilemma. Foreign journals after being mailed take at least three to four months- very often even more- to reach their destinations in South and South East Asian countries. The loss of an issue in transit can only come to light when the next issue

is received four to five months later. In the circumstances, even if a reminder is rushed by air mail, it is of little value. The reply from the publishers comes by surface mail taking yet another two to three months. The long expected reply is generally cold and sterile. The reply often consists of the following statements:

i) Since your claim has reached us too late, issues are no more available.

or ii) We cannot replace the missing issues free of charge.

or iii) The journals were posted properly. They were not returned as undeliverable. So please make enquiries at your post office.

On enquiry at the local post-office, the reply is "Since the journals have come by ordinary surface mail, it is difficult to trace the missing issues and it would be better to write to the publishers or check at your end." Thus comes the "END" of all the heart-breaking endeavour made in this regard. Some publishers ofcourse give replacement copies but their percentage is negligible.

Librarians, professors and research workers, in short, the subscribers to the journals, are now at their wit's end. Finding no alternative, Dr. Kamaluddin Ahmed, the Director of the Institute of Nutrition, Dacca University approached the authorities of Bangladesh Biman,(the national airline of Bangladesh) to collect the journals at their London Office and then bring them to Bangladesh from time to time. The attempt failed. Obviously, who at Bangladesh Biman(London) will receive the journals and then send these to Dacca.

2. Some research organisations opened post boxes at their local post offices to guard against losses of journals due to postal misdelivery. The process as we have heard has however not helped much.

3. Some librarians approached the publishers to have their journals sent by registered post. Some publishers agreed but a majority declined as it involves extra postal charges and additional labour

4. Some subscribers approached the publishers to have bound volumes or all the issues together at the end of the year by registered post. Most of the publishers do not agree to this. Obviously they do not like to undertake the responsibility of collecting and preserving all the issues and then send these at the end of each year by registered post.

5. At the begining of 1976, the British Council decided to convert the majority of its periodical subscription from surface to air mail. This is an expensive decision since the cost of air mail can often exceed the cost of the journal. For the British Council, foreign exchange is not to be a problem but with a limited budget and especially foreign exchange quotas, subscribers to foreign journals in Bangladesh are either to cut half their quantity of journals or to arrange additional funds and forign exchange. Also the British Council's endeavour is still under review.

From the above analysis, it will be apparent that subscribing to foreign journals in Bangladesh is getting more difficult day by day. The

The increasing price of journals and the increasing cost of postage as well as the rising number of claims for missing issues have made the whole business of subscribing to journals one of despair. To-day subscribing to forign journals mean the wastage of hard earned foreign exchange and the isolation of our research workers from what is currently happening in their respective fields of research.

The problem with all its pros and cons is presented before you. It needs your help in finding a solution. As a prelude to the solution, the following points may be considered:

(1) The only viable medium through which journals move from the source to the subscribers is the postal services, be it surface or air. The postal authorities around the world therefore are to be approached in order to protect against any pilferage or misdelivery of the journals.

(2) Special postal arrangement could be made by the publishers to send journals to South and South East Asian countries by registered post so that the part of missing issues can be traced. The postal authorities also could be requested to favour subscribers of this region with a concessional registration postal charges.

(3) It takes three to four months for the journals to arrive after they have been duly posted by their publishers/ suppliers. The time lag factor and also losses of journals by surface mail can be diminished if all the journals could be brought by air mail. The authorities of the International Air Traffic Association (I A T A) may be

requested to allow special concessional freight charges on journals.

4) While sending the journals, care should be taken that they do not send journals in loose wrappers with both ends open. Experience shows that a good number of publishers send journals in loose wrappers having both ends open with attendant risk of their contents (journals) being dropped or slipped out with the slightest jerk. Journals and wrappers thus once separated can hardly be reconjugated because the address is written only on the wrapper and its contents i.e. the journals bear no further identification mark. The Pergamon Press Limited sends journals in visible polythene wrapper with both ends tightly closed. Other publishers may follow this packaging practice to ensure both the safety of the contents and the privilage of second class postal charges.

5)(a) Some publishers abbreviate the address to such an extent that it becomes quite unrecognizable. The address of the Bangladesh University of Engineering & Technology, Dacca for example, has been abbreviated as follows:

LIBRARIAN
BANGLADESH UNIV
DACCA

(b) Some publishers write the address incorrectly often showing Dacca as being in India.

Example:

Correct address	Wrong address
LIBRARIAN BANGLADESH UNIVERSITY OF ENGINEERING & TECHNOLOGY, DACCA-2, BANGLADESH	LIBRARIAN UNIVERSITY OF ENGG & TECHNOLOGY,DACCA INDIA

... etc.

o

For both the reasons stated above, it is no wonder that some packets of journals go to India or elsewhere or pile up in the "Dead Letter Box Office".

The utmost care, therefore, should be taken by the publishers to ensure that the journals are properly wrapped, the address is written clearly and correctly and with full details.

6) Meanwhile, to help the libraries in Bangladesh and others, some cooperative project at international level may be evolved whereby missing issues can be filled up by contacting the other libraries where the desired missing copies might have been received in duplicate.

These are a few suggestions which the writer can offer from his experience. Other and better suggestions may crop up from the audience, through discussion. With this hope, I should like to conclude my paper.

Abu Nasr Siddiqui